

Who Cares About

Humanities West Program Explores

by Har

Change is the rule of life. Now we are living in an era of political correctness, when some insist we overthrow tradition and battle educational bias toward the writings of "dead white males." It is a time of technology and diversity, of fast moving change liberating us from the monotonous dead hand of the past. We celebrate progress in the growth of democracy around the globe, and the universal struggle for human rights and democratic ideas. Change has made the world a different place than it was only three years ago; a vastly different place than it was fifty years ago. People living on earth one century ago may as well have been inhabiting another planet from the one we know now. What possible relevance, therefore (except to scholars, dreamers, and tourists) can Greece of *twenty-five* centuries ago really have for us moderns today?

Since 1983 Humanities West has been "exploring history to celebrate the mind and the arts." It presents lively programs about different historic times and places in a sort of cultural time-travel. Humanities West programs, rich in visual images, ideas, and lively conversation, give audiences an understanding and appreciation of important times and places in humanity's historic journey. On June 3 and 4 of this year, at Herbst Theatre in San Francisco, Humanities West will present *The Classical Ideal: The Enduring Light of Ancient Greece*, a program that will include answers to questions about what, if anything, we still have to learn from ancient Greece.

Speakers and presenters for *The Classical Ideal* will be authorities with international reputations for expertise in the art, architecture, history, literature, and philosophy of ancient Greece.

They will turn their attention to those achievements of the ancient Greeks that have a lively relevance to our lives today. In a variety of presentations, they will show the audience at Herbst Theatre why we can still find wisdom, comfort, pleasure, instruction, and even exhilarating joy from the works of classical Greece (the 4th-5th centuries B.C.).

On Friday, June 3, in the opening evening program, Professor Alexander Nehamas of Princeton University, one of the world's great scholars and teachers in the field of ancient philosophical thought, will begin the program. He will lecture and lead a discussion on "The Greek Temple: Nature and the Gods." Professor Nehamas will look at the artistic, philosophical, political, and religious origins of the dazzling architecture created by the Greeks, a type of architecture that we still see everywhere around us. The Friday evening program will conclude with a performance by professional actors of dramatic excerpts from ancient Greek dramas. In brief excerpts from works of Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides, the actor's presentations will highlight social and political themes—such as conflicts between rights of the individual and families on the one hand, and demands of government on the other—that are still very much with us.

On Saturday morning, June 4, the program will continue at Herbst Theatre with a lecture by Eva T.H. Brann, Dean of St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland. Dean Brann is an archaeologist and one time Fellow at the Princeton Institute of Advanced Studies. She is a much loved teacher and author and a life-time student of philosophy. Her latest book, *The World of the Imagination*, is a wide and deep

TAX FREE CARS FOR GREECE

The Ancient Greeks?

Their Continued Importance to Us

on Sheppard

survey of the concept of the human imagination. Dean Brann's lecture, titled "Sight Unseen: Philosophy in Greece," examines the character of Greek light and ancient art (particularly sculpture), architecture, and thought, to consider those enduring insights of the ancients from which we may still learn.

program as a whole. *The Classical Ideal* will then conclude with an informal discussion between the audience and the speakers that will be moderated by the writer of this article, Harrison Sheppard.

Elaine Thornburgh, president and founder of Humanities West, summarized the program as "really about an-

*"We are all Greeks.
Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts
have their roots in Greece."
—Percy B. Shelley, Preface to Hellas (1821).*

HUMANITIES WEST
"exploring history to celebrate
the mind and the arts"

**THE CLASSICAL IDEAL:
THE ENDURING LIGHT OF ANCIENT GREECE**

As constant as the paradox of being, the light of ancient Greece is always with us. There have been periods when it illuminated the heavens so brightly, it seemed to enlighten all the earth. During other periods it became hidden behind clouds of unacknowledged ignorance, leaving the world darker, but never without hope of its eventual return from obscurity. Whenever we are tempted to grieve at the apparent absence of an enlightened view in the world, we should recollect that the light of Greece endures:

in the search for knowledge, and in every serious question;
in the struggle to know oneself;
in every chorus of laughter that includes us all;
in the admiration of beauty for its own sake;
in the love of learning;
in the effort to live free in community with others; and,
in the faith that humankind may yet deserve or win a noble
place even in the vastness of eternity.

The light of Greece has helped to give the human world its being, and the darkness cannot comprehend it.

—Harrison Sheppard

The Classical Ideal: The Enduring Light of Ancient Greece inquires into and celebrates the seminal ideas and works of classical Greece (the 4th and 5th centuries B.C.) and the ways in which they continue to animate and enrich our lives.



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